

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 1

LOS ANGELES TIMES
28 July 1985

'FBI Is All Over the Place'

S.F. Soviet Consulate: Cow Hollow Intrigue

By WILLIAM OVEREND, Times Staff Writer

SAN FRANCISCO—On a dead-end street in a residential neighborhood overlooking San Francisco Bay, suspiciously idle young men who deny that they are FBI surveillance agents sit in parked cars throughout the day.

There is a basketball hoop near the cul de sac that serves as their post, and the neighbors say that they occasionally get out of their cars to shoot some baskets and practice their dribbling.

Most of the time, however, the young men simply wait in their cars until replacements arrive and it is their turn to patrol the surrounding streets, paying particular attention to activities around a mysterious seven-story brick building down the hill.

The Soviet Consulate, on the corner of Green and Baker streets in the affluent San Francisco neighborhood of Cow Hollow, is regarded by U.S. intelligence sources as the center of Soviet espionage activities on the West Coast.

Because of the Soviet presence, Cow Hollow, so named because several dairies once operated in the area, has also become a center of FBI counterintelligence activity in the West.

Although the young men up the hill on Vallejo Street deny any FBI connection, government officials concede that they are members of a special FBI surveillance team assigned to watch the consulate around the clock.

The FBI's other monitoring techniques are not so obvious, but many Cow Hollow residents believe that the FBI occupies several houses in the area and has installed cameras and electronic eavesdropping equipment in residences close to the consulate.

Testimony of FBI surveillance agents during the recent spy trial

of Svetlana and Nikolai Ogorodnikov in Los Angeles revealed that almost everybody who visits the Soviet Consulate is photographed and identified by one means or another.

Both of the Ogorodnikovs, convicted of conspiring with former FBI agent Richard W. Miller to pass secret FBI documents to the Soviet Union, were visitors at the Soviet Consulate, and were photographed there by the FBI. The investigation that led to their arrest last Oct. 2 also exposed one of the dozen Soviet vice consuls operating out of the consulate, Alexander

Grishin, as a KGB agent.

Grishin, the first Soviet diplomat in San Francisco named as an unindicted co-conspirator in an espionage case, has subsequently left the United States and returned to Moscow, reportedly on a lengthy vacation. If he returns, he may later be officially expelled from the United States.

"The FBI is all over the place," one neighborhood resident said, requesting anonymity on grounds that he does not want any trouble with the Soviets. "They had some of their monitoring equipment in my house for awhile. Now it's in another house, and they have other places, too."

In July, 1983, in connection with his lawsuit against the FBI because they fired him for being overweight, former agent David Castleberry claimed that the FBI had dug a tunnel under the Soviet Consulate to eavesdrop on the Soviets.

While the FBI denied the existence of the tunnel, neighbors say the Soviets immediately dug a 15-foot-deep trench around their building to see if such a tunnel

existed.

Miller's own trial is scheduled for Aug. 6 in Los Angeles. It has still not been revealed how the FBI learned of his involvement with the Ogorodnikovs, but the FBI's investigation of Miller began only a few days after he traveled with Svetlana Ogorodnikova to the San Francisco consulate last Aug. 25.

There has been speculation that the FBI has wiretaps on the telephones inside the consulate, and that speculation was strengthened by an account of the FBI's questioning of Miller before his arrest. It was released last month in a court document filed in connection with his trial.

Referring to Miller's account of the San Francisco trip, FBI agents quoted Miller as telling them that he had warned Ogorodnikova that the consulate phones were bugged.

"Miller . . . informed her that the telephones were monitored," the FBI quoted Miller as saying. "Miller stated he gave her this information to enhance his position with her and thought since both sides did the same thing it was common knowledge."

The Soviets themselves maintain that the consulate's primary function is to promote good will and improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. They have little else to say about what goes on inside, and declined a request for an interview last week.

But one clue to the activities is the forest of radio antennae and electronic devices that has sprouted on the roof of the consulate building since the Soviets arrived in 1972.

FBI agents say the Soviet electronic equipment is capable of intercepting phone conversations at the hundreds of defense contractors and computer firms operating in the nearby Silicon Valley and recording them electronically with the help of computers.

"Probably their No. 1 target in the United States is the Silicon Valley," said Robert S. Gast II, a former counterintelligence agent who now heads the FBI's San Francisco office. "The gear on the building isn't there for picking up TV programs."

The consulate has a staff of 50 diplomats and support personnel,

Continued